

ABC's of Health

Physical Activity

Awareness. . .

One of the most important things you can do to help yourself stay healthy is to be physically active. Regular physical activity can improve your fitness, appearance and sense of well-being.

Reasons to be physically active:

- Lower blood pressure and stress
- Stronger muscles and bones
- More energy and flexibility
- Weight control
- Better posture
- Higher self esteem
- Less risk of lower back problems
- Protection against heart disease, cancer and diabetes

There are **three** basic kinds of physical activity. Each one helps you in different ways:

Flexibility - activities that help you move, bend, stretch and twist your muscles easily. Examples of these are stretching exercises like arm circles, trunk twists and yoga.

Strength and endurance - activities that help you build muscle include pushups, sit-ups, weight-lifting, and activities like tennis and basketball.

Aerobic - activities that make your heart and lungs strong, including fast walking, jogging, riding a bike, and swimming. In order to benefit most from aerobic activities, try to do at least 30 minutes most days of the week. You can even do small amounts of 10 minutes at a time.



Problems that may come from **NOT** being physically active are:

- * **Weak** muscles
- * **Overweight**
- * **Lack** of energy
- * **Aging** faster
- * Chronic low back **pain**
- * **Increased** chance of heart disease, stroke and diabetes
- * **Reduced** functioning of heart and lungs
- * **Stiff** joints and muscles that ache
- * Bones that **break** more easily
- * **High blood pressure**

BEHAVIOR

1. **Begin a regular activity program** - start slowly, build it up over time, and stick with it.
2. **Combine fun and physical activity** - try dancing, bowling, skating, riding a bike and hiking, anything that gets you moving.
3. **Include some physical activity every day, whether at home or work** - When possible, walk, don't ride. Take the stairs, not the elevator. When you take a break, do stretching exercises.

Special Caution: Before starting a physical activity program, see a doctor!

CHANGE

- Take a **walk** on breaks, lunch, or after dinner.
- Check the area where you live for physical activity **programs** and sign up.
- Do **gardening** or mow the yard. Use a **push mower**!
- **Vacuum** and dust the house.
- Ride a **bike** or go for a **swim**.



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